
Board of Selectmen
Joint Meeting with School Committee
Minutes of January 20, 2015

I. Call to Order

Chairman Kowalski reconvened the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 7:50 P.M. in the second floor conference room located in the Town Offices. Present from the Board of Selectmen: Brian Major-Y, Alex Vispoli-Y, Paul Salafia-Y, Mary O'Donoghue-Y, and Dan Kowalski-Y. School Committee members: David Birnbach-Y, Annie Gilbert-Y Joel Blumstein-Y, and Paula Colby-Clements-Y. Also present: Town Manager Buzz Stapczynski and Superintendent Marinel McGrath. The meeting was duly posted and cablecast live.

II. Executive Session

At 7:00 P.M. on a motion by Brian Major and seconded by Paul Salafia, the Board of Selectmen moved into Executive Session for consultation with Town Counsel for confidential legal advice to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to return to Open Session. Roll call: P. Salafia-Y, A. Vispoli-Y, B. Major-Y, M. O'Donoghue-Y, and D. Kowalski-Y. At 7:45 P.M. a motion by Mary O'Donoghue, and seconded by Alex Vispoli, the Board moved to adjourn from Executive Session and move to Open Session, not to return to Executive Session. Roll call: A. Vispoli-Y, P. Salafia-Y, B. Major-Y, M. O'Donoghue-Y, and D. Kowalski-Y.

III. Opening Ceremonies

A. Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Kowalski led the meeting in a Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Regular Business of the Board:

A. School Committee Member Vacancy

Chairman Kowalski explained that the election of Barbara L'Italien as State Senator and resignation as a member of the Andover School Committee has left an open position on the School Committee which may be filled for the period up to the March Town Elections.

Annie Gilbert, Chair of the Andover School Committee talked about the input received from other School Committee members about the vacancy and how to move forward. This particular situation highlights the awkwardness of the March General Election and begs the question if there should be a change in the timing of the elections. Paula Colby-Clements pointed out that the majority of the School Committee will be completely turning over prior to Town Meeting; it is a unique situation and she feels they should consider having a future discussion on changing election dates. Filling a vacancy at this

time of year is a very short period of time for someone to sit on the School Committee (about 6 weeks) then leaving.

Joel Blumstein talked about the short period of time the person would be serving and the time it would take the other School Committee members to educate that person. David Birnbach suggested possible selection of a former school committee member or elected official.

The Board of Selectmen feels it is critical to have someone with experience to fill the position.

Annie Gilbert will submit a formal written notice to the Board of Selectmen to fill the position and to post an opportunity to serve and that preference may be given to an individual with prior public board experience. The deadline for applications will be Friday, January 30th and the Board of Selectmen and School Committee will conduct a joint vote at the February 2, 2015 Board of Selectmen's meeting at 7:00 P.M.

B. Tax Levy FY-2016

The Town Manager provided the Boards with a report of Hypothetical Tax Levy Reductions vs Estimated Operating Budget Impacts for FY-16, a Property Tax Bill Projection Model, and an updated report on Revenue & Expenditure Projections. The charts have all been updated showing the latest numbers and assumptions. The reports show the results of using the levy capacity and a reduction of \$1.1M in levy capacity as requested. They also used the model provided by Joanne Marden at the prior meeting to show multiple years using the debt analysis tool.

Alex Vispoli suggested they add a column showing the impact on an average tax bill, to add context to the equations with a tax bill as a variable and as a percentage. The Board discussed the budget reports provided by the Town Manager asking various questions and talking about the impact of employee benefit expenses (retirement/health).

The Town Manager said health insurance quotes will not be released until after the MIAA Board votes on the percentage of increase as they set the tone across the insurance industry in the state. Andover's rate experience has been good; however, there have been a higher rate of claims this year so they will use an 8% figure for health insurance this year.

Revenues have increased by \$1.5M over last year and they are anticipating a very slight increase in local aid this year.

Expenditures: The Board talked about the cost of health insurance and retirement expenses and their effect on the budget. Brian Major noted that it would be difficult for

Departments to go below a 2.7% increase in their budgets. Mary O'Donoghue said expenditures are choking available funds for operating budgets.

Free Cash: The Town Manager suggests using some free cash to buffer expenses being paid for and therefore decreasing the amount of money borrowed. Operating budgets are no longer being buffered with free cash. There are requests for new hires within the budget which are not reflected in the budget charts distributed. The Town Manager is asking Department Heads to promote efficiencies to the Board in their presentations and to list positions authorized but not filled and to add to the quarterly reports positions not filled.

The Board has requested the budget be built without using the \$1.1M. The Board needs to give direction to the Town Manager and give him time to formulate a plan to meet their needs. The Town Manager's decision will be provided in his budget presentation in February. The School Committee should submit their best budget within reasonable limits.

Audience:

Kerry Costello, President of the Andover Teachers Association reiterated her understanding of the Town Charter which is to develop a budget most reflective of the Town's needs and she hopes the Town Manager starts his recommended budget from that point.

V. Adjournment

At 9:10 P.M. on a motion by Selectman Vispoli and seconded by Selectman Major, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting of January 20, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary

Documents: Budget models and Revenue and Expense Projection